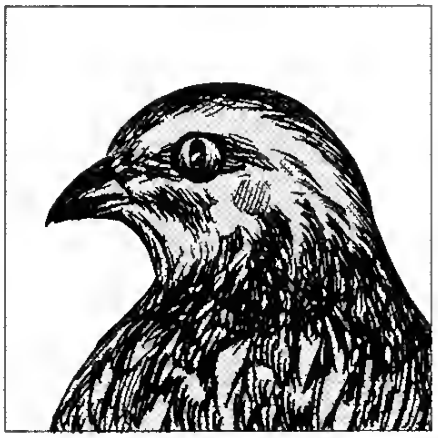
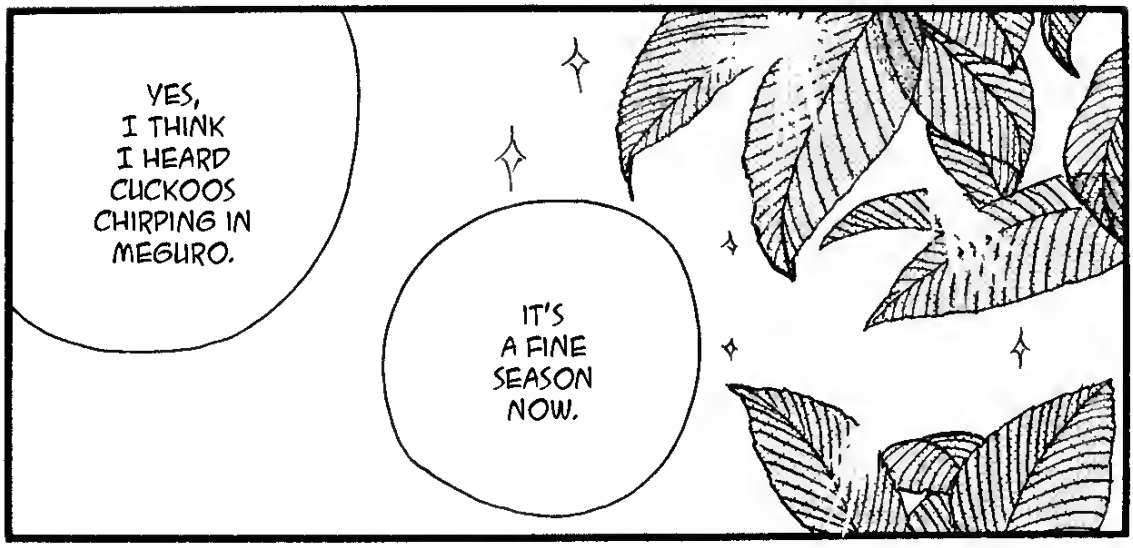
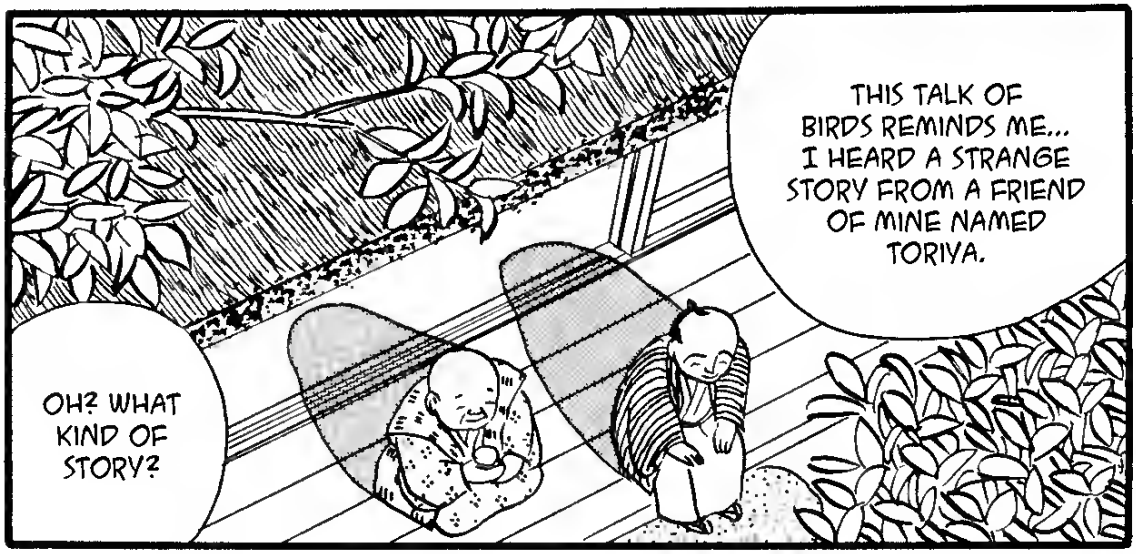
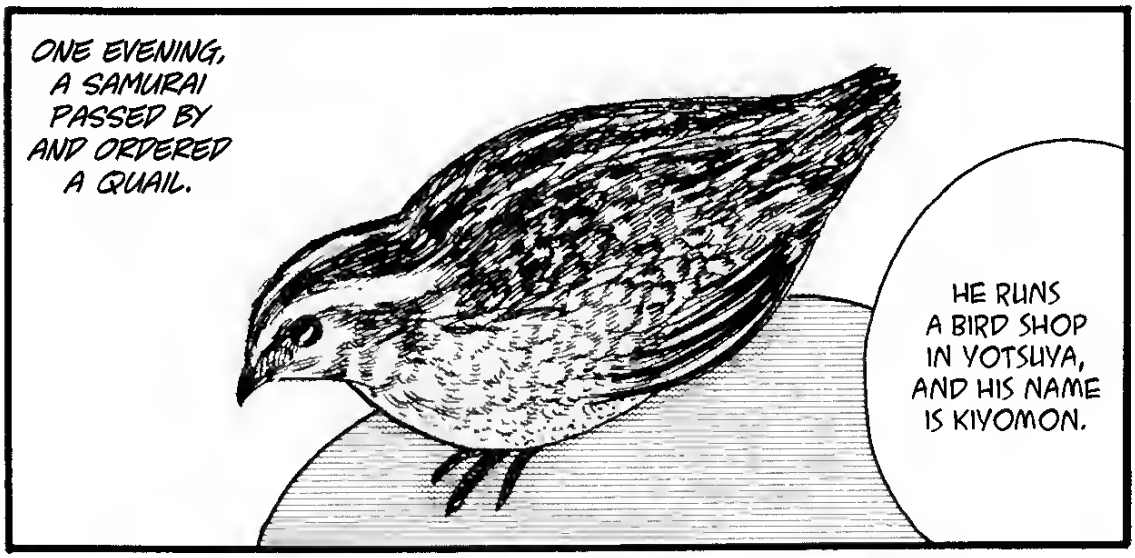
Tale 4

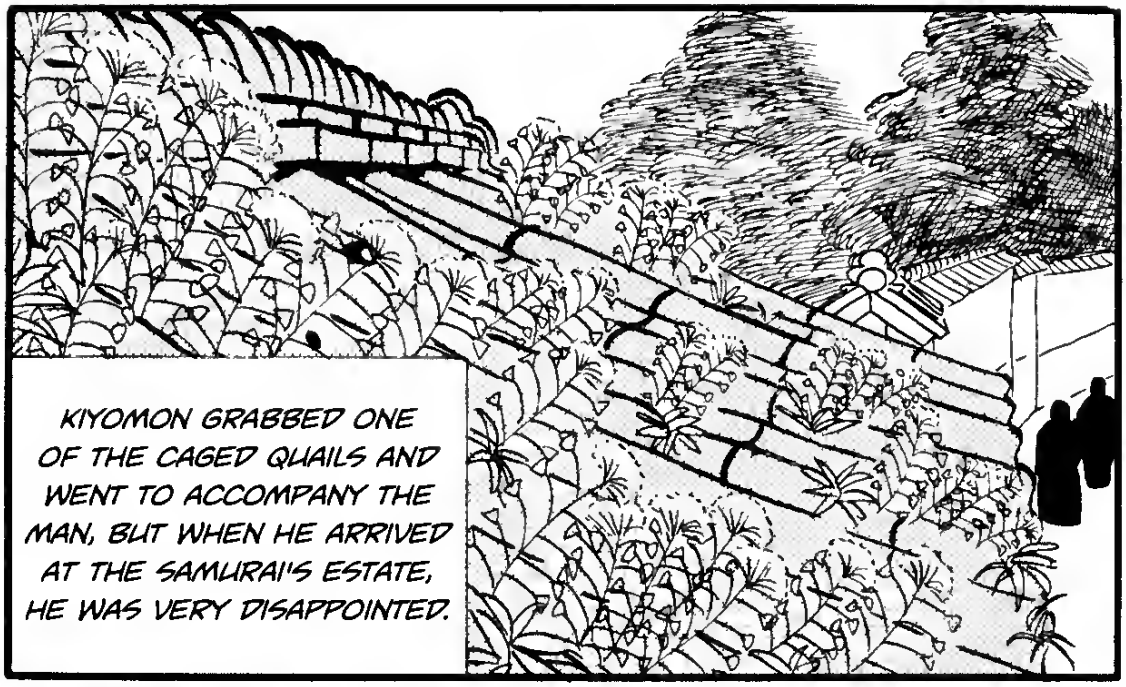
Toriya Kiyomon

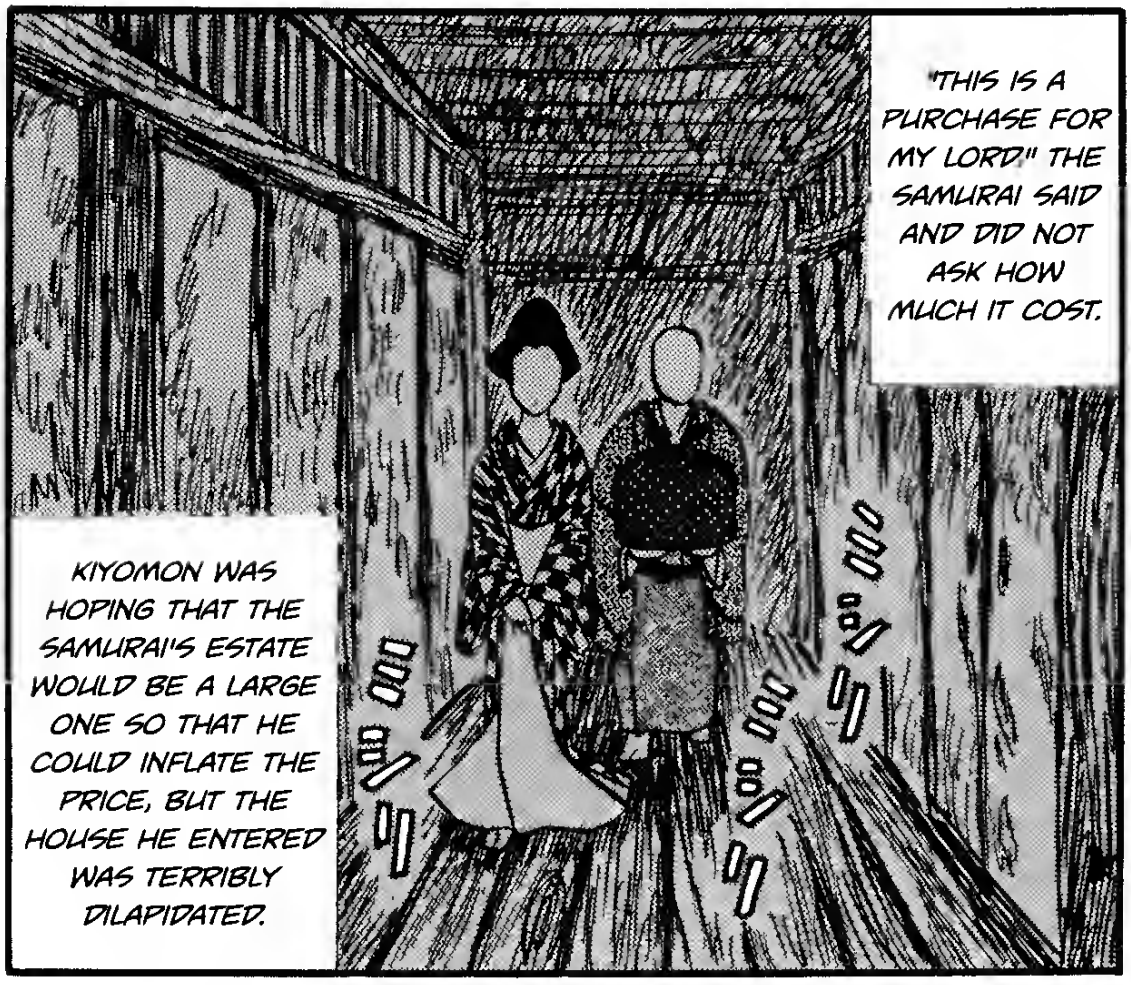


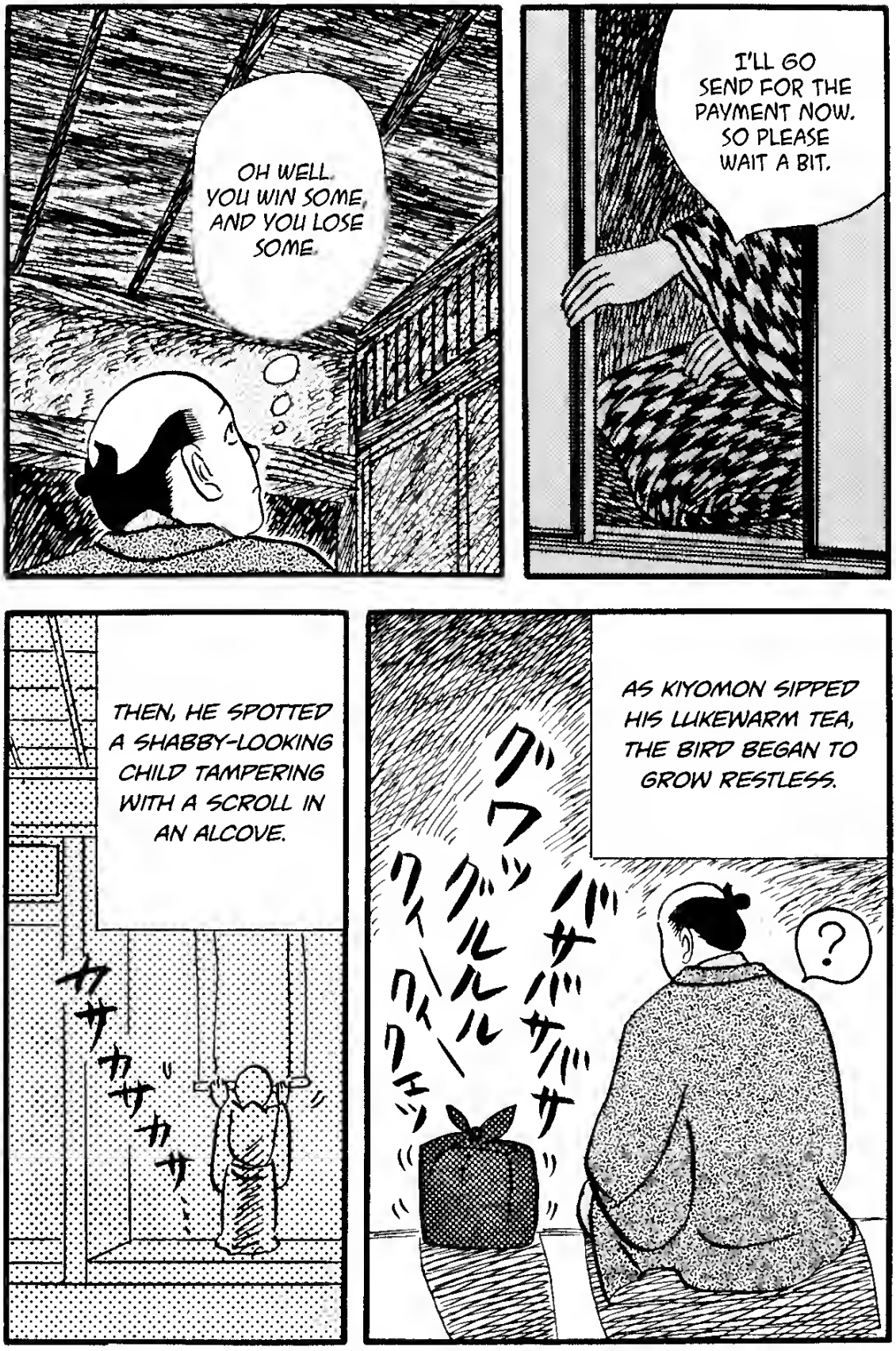

YES, I THINK I HEARD CUCKOOS CHIRPING IN MEGURO.
IT'S A FINE SEASON NOW.


THIS TALK OF BIRDS REMINDS ME... I HEARD A STRANGE STORY FROM A FRIEND OF MINE NAMED TORIYA.
OH? WHAT KIND OF STORY?


ONE EVENING, A SAMURAI PASSED BY AND ORDERED A QUAIL.
HE RUNS A BIRD SHOP IN YOTSUYA, AND HIS NAME IS KIYOMON.


KIYOMON GRABBED ONE OF THE CAGED QUAILS AND WENT TO ACCOMPANY THE MAN, BUT WHEN HE ARRIVED AT THE SAMURAI'S ESTATE, HE WAS VERY DISAPPOINTED.


"THIS IS A PURCHASE FOR MY LORD." THE SAMURAI SAID AND DID NOT ASK HOW MUCH IT COST.
KIYOMON WAS HOPING THAT THE SAMURAI'S ESTATE WOULD BE A LARGE ONE SO THAT HE COULD INFLATE THE PRICE, BUT THE HOUSE HE ENTERED WAS TERRIBLY DILAPIDATED.


OH WELL. YOU WIN SOME, AND YOU LOSE SOME.
I'LL GO SEND FOR THE PAYMENT NOW. SO PLEASE WAIT A BIT.
THEN, HE SPOTTED A SHABBY-LOOKING CHILD TAMPERING WITH A SCROLL IN AN ALCOVE.
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AS KIYOMON SIPPED HIS LUKEWARM TEA, THE BIRD BEGAN TO GROW RESTLESS.
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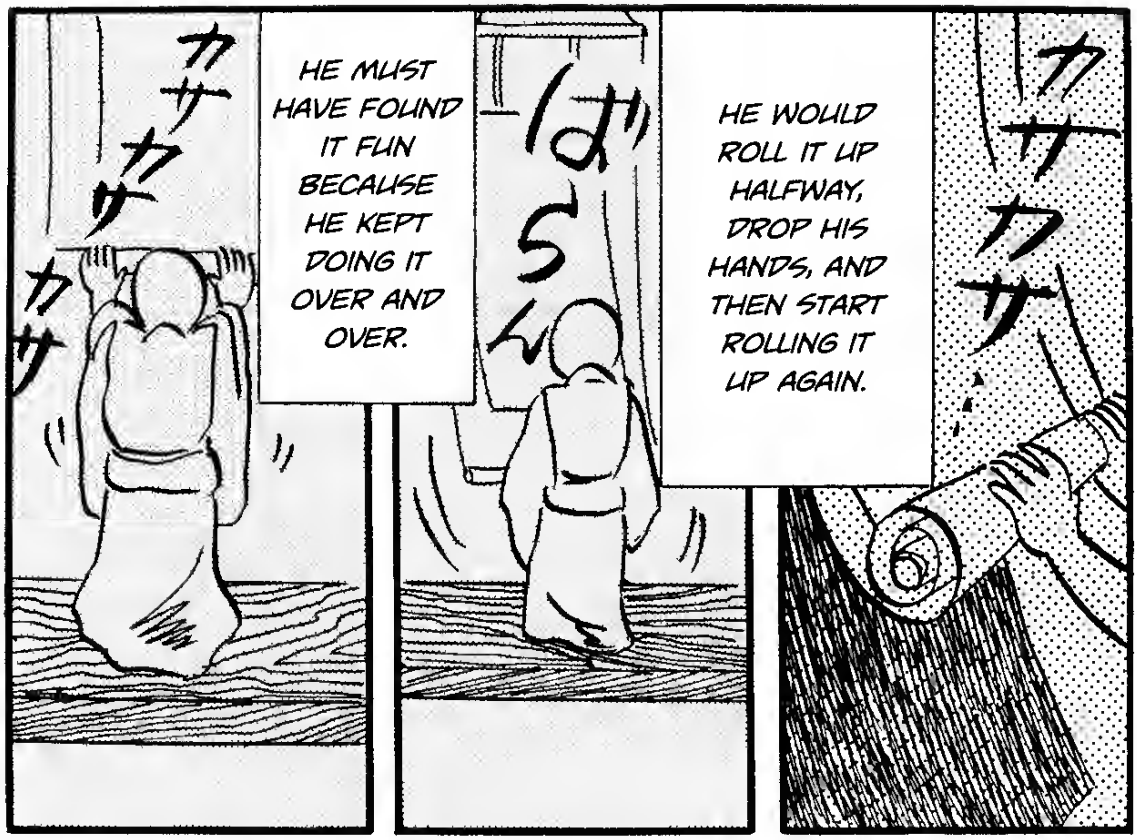
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HE MUST HAVE FOUND IT FUN BECAUSE HE KEPT DOING IT OVER AND OVER.
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HE WOULD ROLL IT UP HALFWAY, DROP HIS HANDS, AND THEN START ROLLING IT UP AGAIN.
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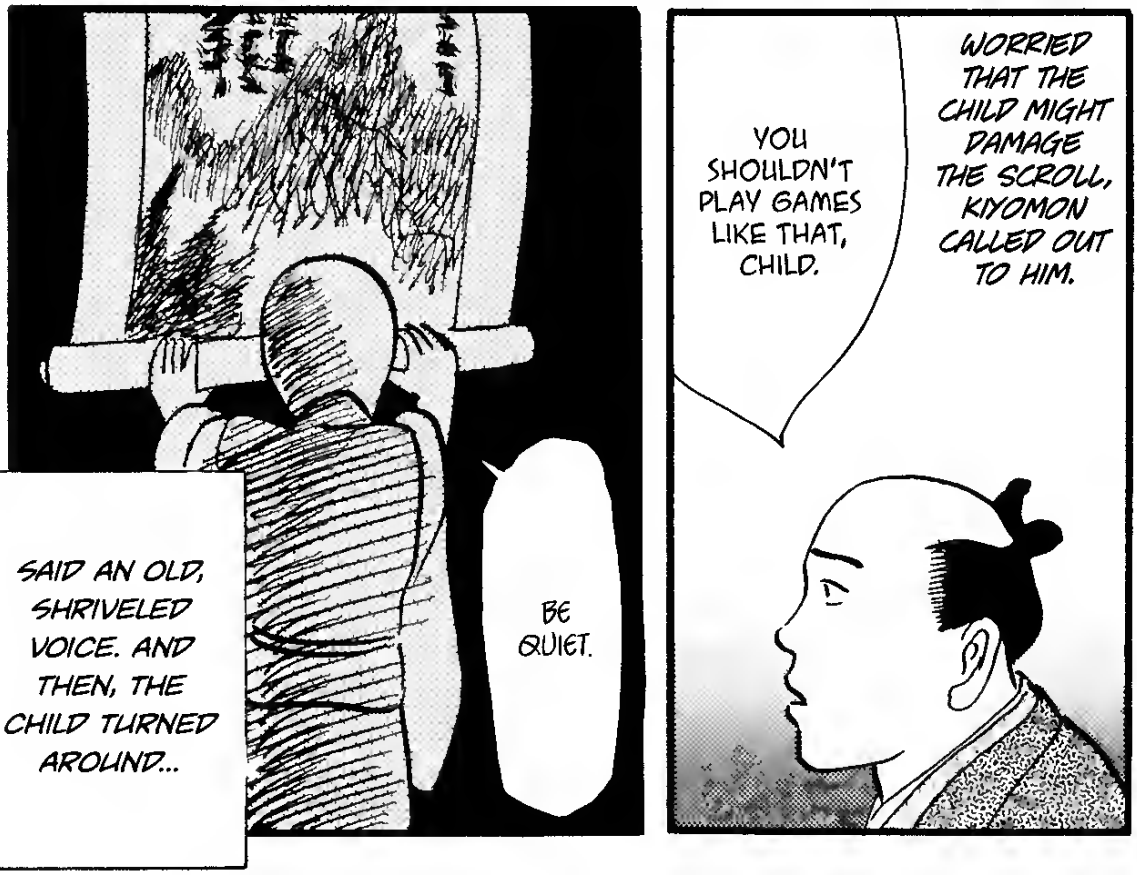
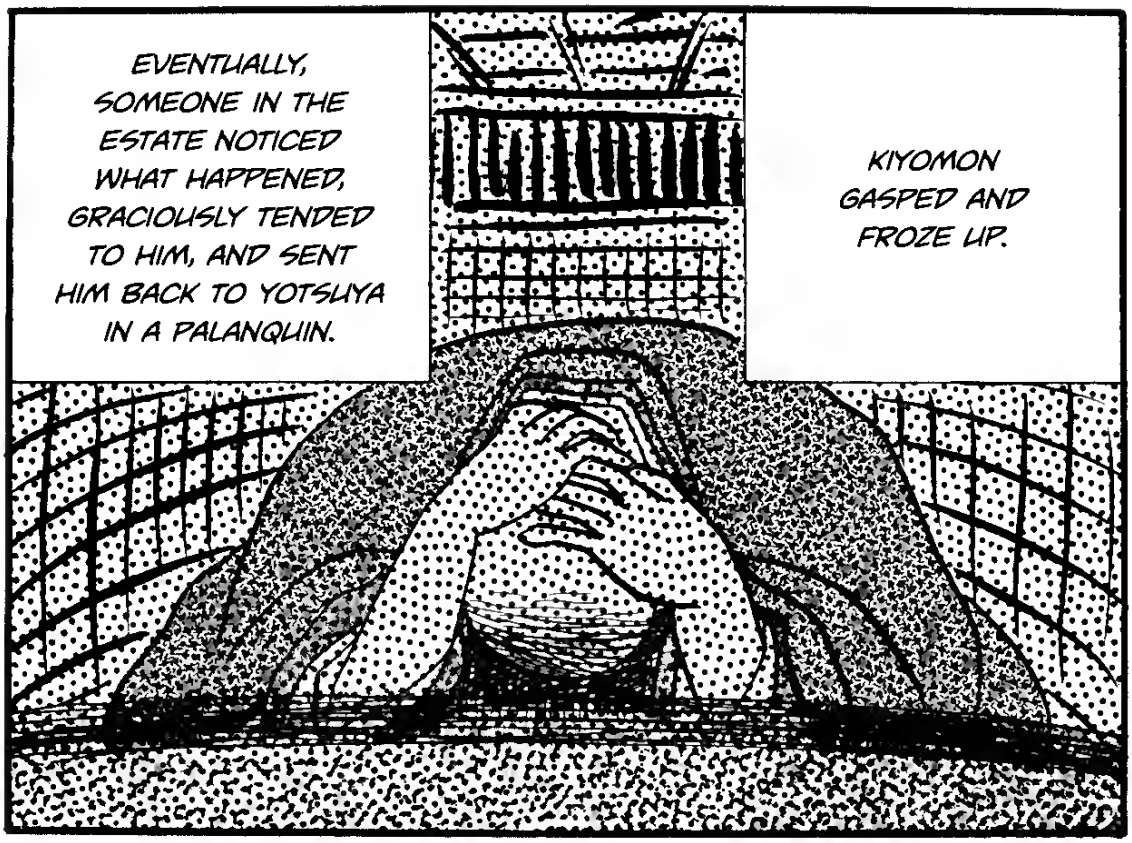
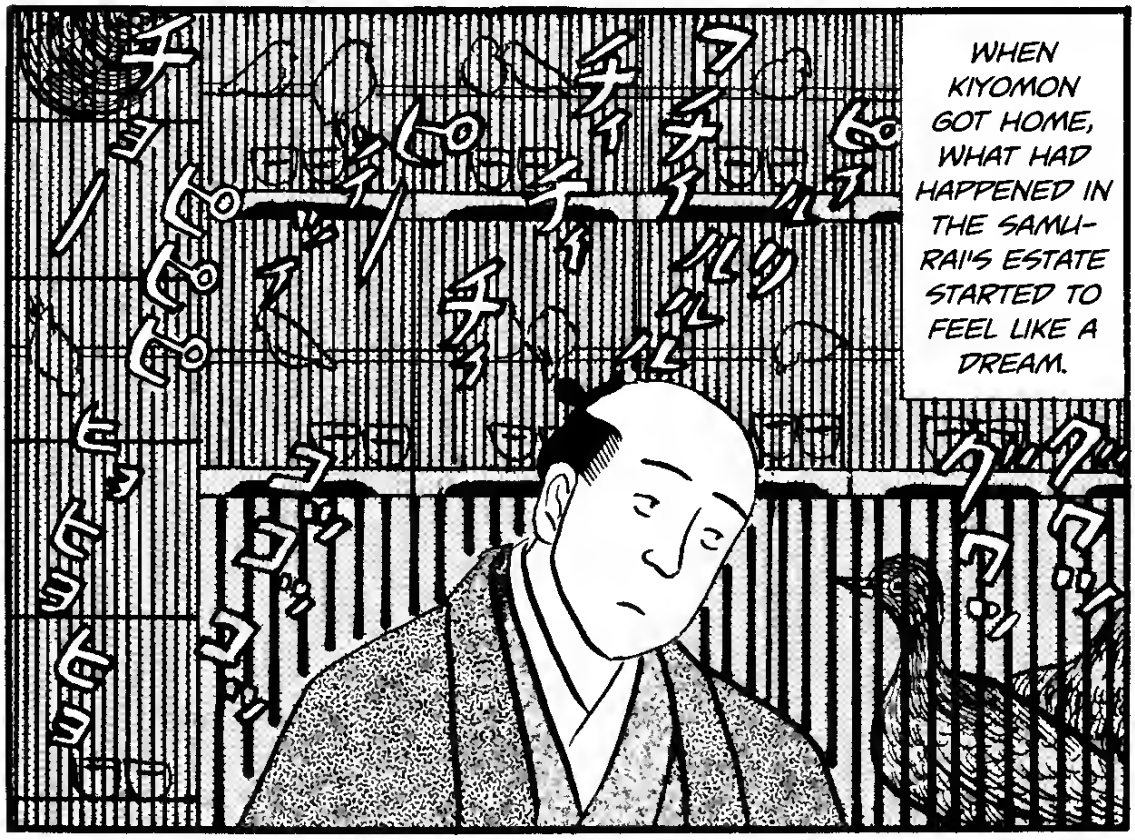
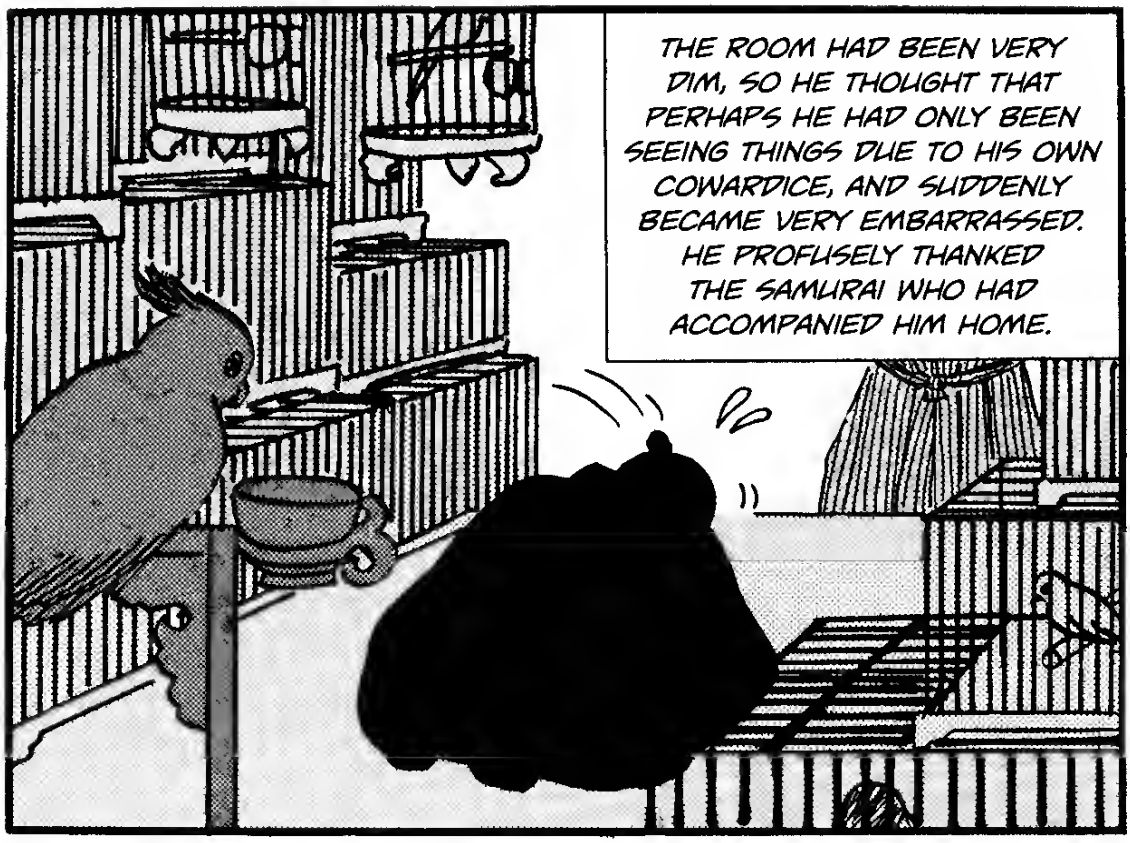
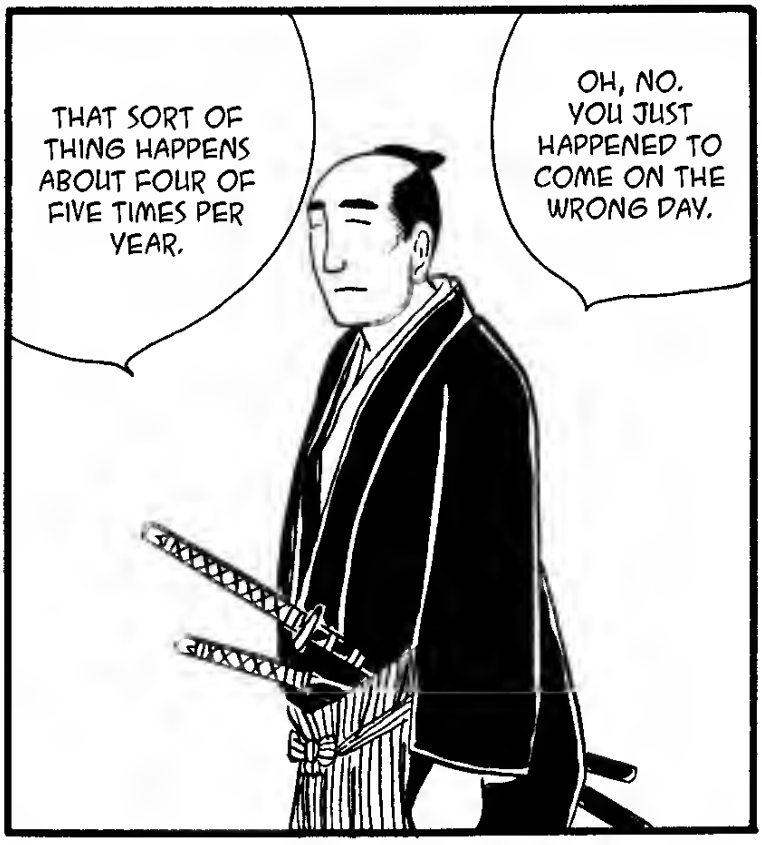

SAID AN OLD, SHRIVELED VOICE. AND THEN, THE CHILD TURNED AROUND...
BE QUIET.
YOU SHOULDN'T PLAY GAMES LIKE THAT, CHILD.
WORRIED THAT THE CHILD MIGHT DAMAGE THE SCROLL, KIYOMON CALLED OUT TO HIM.


EVENTUALLY, SOMEONE IN THE ESTATE NOTICED WHAT HAPPENED, GRACIOUSLY TENDED TO HIM, AND SENT HIM BACK TO YOTSUYA IN A PALANQUIN.
KIYOMON GASPED AND FROZE UP.


WHEN KIYOMON GOT HOME, WHAT HAD HAPPENED IN THE SAMURAI'S ESTATE STARTED TO FEEL LIKE A DREAM.


THE ROOM HAD BEEN VERY DIM, SO HE THOUGHT THAT PERHAPS HE HAD ONLY BEEN SEEING THINGS DUE TO HIS OWN COWARDICE, AND SUDDENLY BECAME VERY EMBARRASSED. HE PROFUSELY THANKED THE SAMURAI WHO HAD ACCOMPANIED HIM HOME.



WHEN KIYOMON HEARD THAT, IT FELT AS IF HIS ENTIRE BODY HAD BEEN DOUSED IN ICE COLD WATER.